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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Just over 900,000 gallons of waste water spilled

Preliminary estimates are that 905,000 gallons of waste water spilled as a result of the pipe break that occurred on Thursday following heavy rains from Hurricane Ophelia. Of that, approximately 155,000 gallons were pumped into tanker trucks to put back into the waste water system. The pipe is a 24-inch main that carries waste water from the Hewlett's Creek pump station into the Southside Waste Water Treatment Plant.

A four-foot split occurred in the pipe at approximately 9:30 a.m. on Thursday. Upon examination, the pipe showed signs of corrosion. City officials believe that the higher flow of water and pressure in the pipe caused by Hurricane Ophelia, combined with the internal corrosion, contributed to the failure.

Much of the 750,000 gallons that was not pumped back into the system will eventually flow into Hewlett's Creek via storm water drains. The city has begun water quality monitoring and testing at five locations recommended by the state Division of Water Quality. Additional steps will be taken if needed after the initial results are evaluated early next week.

Beginning this afternoon, contracted crews began cleaning up properties impacted by the spill. Work will continue on Saturday. Residents are being updated about the repair and cleanup efforts by hand-delivered letters today.

Shipyard Boulevard, PineValley Drive and Jeb Stuart Drive were all re-opened today. The berm has been removed, but the pipe excavation site remains open so that staff can make further inspections. City staff have already begun working on plans for a permanent repair. A timeline for that has not yet been established.

There is no threat to drinking water and waste water services have not been interrupted. However, as a precaution, the city recommends that citizens not come into contact with any standing water.

The city notified affected residents about the spill, both by door-to-door notification and distributing fliers. Road signs were also erected and state, county and health department officials were notified.

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For more information, contact City PIO Malissa Talbert at 342-2736 or 470-8720.